

STATE OF NEVADA

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
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Nevada State Board of Education

Re: Letter of importance for Nevada schools districts to collect Body Mass Index (BMI) Data

I am writing today on behalf of the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health, in support of Nevada school districts collecting BMI data from students enrolled in grades 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. We strongly believe that collecting this data will help Nevada to identify the obesity status of our youth, in order to better align our state efforts to address childhood obesity.

As Nevada's Chief Medical Officer, the health and well-being of youth in Nevada is always a top priority. Due to 2013 modifications to Senate Bill 442, it is no longer legislatively mandated that school districts, within a county whose population is less than 100,000, collect height and weight of students enrolled in grades 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. With these new modifications, Nevada is unable to accurately distinguish current obesity rates and future chronic disease implications.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, BMI is "a reliable indicator of body fatness for most children and teens. BMI is an inexpensive and easy-to-perform method of screening for weight categories that may lead to health problems." Due to Nevada's constrained budget, collecting this data is the most cost effective way to evaluate the health status of Nevada's youth. Although these efforts can be cumbersome to school districts in Nevada, we strongly believe that the benefits we receive, as a state, are outweighed. The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health strongly supports and encourages all school districts in Nevada to collect BMI data from students enrolled in grades 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely,

Tracey D. Green, MD  
Chief Medical Officer